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NATIONAL SECURITY AND
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AUG 26 1983

RELEASED

The Honorable Peter W. Rodino, Jr.
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Subject: Analysis of Selected Operations of the Office of
the U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs
(GAO/NSIAD-83-45)

By letter dated February 2, 1983, you requested our assistance in reviewing the operations of the Office of the U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs. In preparation for consideration of the 1984 reauthorization of the Refugee Act of 1980 and focusing on the role of the U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs, you cited certain matters for attention in our review, including the

- staffing, organization, and funding of the U.S. Coordinator's Office;
- allocation of resources to each of the Office's mandates as set forth in the Refugee Act of 1980;
- Coordinator's effectiveness in carrying out each of these mandates;
- need for the Office; and
- Office's efforts to expand resettlement opportunities in other countries and the success of those efforts.



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The officials with whom we held discussions generally concluded that a focal point at the Federal level is needed to coordinate the multifaceted U.S. refugee program which is planned, funded, administered and implemented by numerous agencies in the U.S. private and public sectors. Concerning the Office's policymaking responsibilities there are, however, differing interpretations between the Coordinator's Office and the program implementing agencies. This has made it difficult for the Coordinator's Office to develop an overall U.S. refugee admission and resettlement policy. The working relationship and

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respective operational roles of the Office and State Department's Bureau for Refugee Programs also need to be clarified. The Office has not fulfilled its responsibilities to design an overall budget strategy and provide agencies with budget policy guidance or to oversee and review agency regulations and procedures. These points were included in testimony before the Chairman, Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees and International Law on June 22, 1983, and are discussed in more detail in enclosure I.

We have discussed the contents of this report with officials of the Coordinator's Office and the Department of State's Bureau for Refugee Programs. They recognize policymaking and operating roles and responsibilities within the U.S. refugee program need to be clarified and that problems exist concerning the respective office functions in the international arena.

No further distribution of this report will be made for 30 days from the date of issue, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier. At the end of that time, copies will be provided to other congressional committees, the Office of the U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs, the Department of State's Bureau for Refugee Programs, and others upon request.

Sincerely yours,



Frank C. Conahan
Director

Enclosure

U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE ANALYSIS
OF SELECTED OPERATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF THE
U.S. COORDINATOR FOR REFUGEE AFFAIRS

OVERVIEW OF THE COORDINATOR'S OFFICE

In response to the dramatic increase in the number of refugees worldwide, in 1979 the United States substantially increased financial international assistance for refugees and the number of refugees granted admission to this country. Former President Carter recognized that U.S. international and domestic refugee programs required better coordination and management as well as planning, policy formulation and budgeting. Private and voluntary organization leaders and State representatives argued for a central focus within the Federal Government to assist in resettling these refugees. Thus, in early 1979, the President issued a directive establishing the Coordinator's Office to improve the coordination of U.S. refugee policies and programs. To assist the Coordinator in carrying out these policies and programs, the President also established an Interagency Committee on Refugee Affairs, chaired by the Coordinator and composed of representatives at the assistant secretary level from the Agency for International Development and the Departments of Health, Education and Welfare (now Health and Human Services--HHS), Justice, Labor, and State.

In March 1980, the Congress gave a statutory basis to the Coordinator's Office by including its roles and functions in the Refugee Act of 1980. The Act specified that the U.S. Coordinator would be responsible to the President for the execution of his mandated duties, along with those delegated to him by the Secretary of State under the authority of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962 (Public Law 87-510), as amended. These statutory responsibilities include

- developing overall U.S. refugee and resettlement policy;
- coordinating all U.S. refugee programs and developing effective liaison between all Federal and other refugee organizations;
- designing an overall budget strategy for U.S. refugee programs;
- representing the administration before the Congress;
- advising Federal departments of U.S. policy;
- reviewing Federal regulations, guidelines and procedures used in carrying out refugee programs; and

--negotiating with foreign governments under the direction of the Secretary of State.

Statutory authority for the Coordinator's Office was intended to help (1) eliminate the ad hoc manner in which the United States admitted and resettled refugees, (2) improve coordination between the various branches of government involved with refugee programs, and (3) develop the structure for a more systematic and comprehensive U.S. refugee program.

The Refugee Act of 1980 also established the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within HHS to fund and administer refugee domestic resettlement programs. This office is to consult with and receive general policy guidance from the Coordinator's Office. The Act also limits to 50,000 the number of refugees admitted to the United States each year. To increase the number of refugees admitted the executive branch must consult with the appropriate congressional committees and provide them with assessments of domestic and international refugee conditions. This information is to be prepared by the Coordinator's Office in cooperation with State's Bureau for Refugee Programs, ORR, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), and is to include an analysis of: the anticipated social, economic, and demographic impact of the admissions, and the effect of refugee resettlement on U.S. foreign policy interests.

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

On February 2, 1983, the Chairman, House Committee on the Judiciary, requested that we review selected operations of the Office of the U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs which was created by the Refugee Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-212).

We, therefore, made this review to provide that Committee with an analysis of the

--staffing, organization, and funding of the Coordinator's Office;

--effectiveness of the Coordinator's Office in carrying out the mandates set forth in the Refugee Act of 1980; and

--efforts made by the Office to expand resettlement opportunities in other countries and the success of these efforts.

We analyzed the legislative history of the Coordinator's Office, reviewed documents on Office staffing and funding and talked with appropriate officials of the Department of State's Office of the Executive Secretariat which is responsible for the Coordinator's budget and administrative functions. We also maintained dialogue and held numerous discussions with officials

in the Coordinator's Office and attended five Office arranged consultation meetings including two regional meetings and three national meetings with the voluntary agencies and Federal departments.

We also interviewed officials from State's Refugee Bureau, ORR, INS, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM).

We spoke with national directors and local representatives of private voluntary organizations and officials of State and local governments and other associations which are responsible for assisting refugees or which are affected by the activities of the Coordinator's Office. All of the observations described in this report are based on our summation of the views expressed by officials from both the public and private sectors and from information gathered in Washington and at the various meetings. We discussed the contents of our draft report with officials of the Coordinator's Office and State's Refugee Bureau and have incorporated, as deemed appropriate, their views into the report.

Our review was made in accordance with generally accepted Government auditing standards.

OUR PREVIOUS REVIEWS

We have twice reviewed the operations and effectiveness of the Coordinator's Office. In April 1981, in a combined effort with the Congressional Research Service, we identified actions which if implemented could increase the Office's effectiveness. In summary, we concluded that the Office should:

- Identify and focus on priority needs, including preparing a clear operating plan to define the responsibilities of the Coordinator in relation to the operating agencies.
- Develop an information system and analysis capability for formulating budget strategies and overseeing agency regulations and procedures--essential for policy development and program coordination.

Later in 1981, we reviewed U.S. programs to resettle Indo-chinese refugees in the United States. In April 1982 testimony before the Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees and International Law, House Judiciary Committee, we stated that:

- The mandate of the Refugee Coordinator's Office is wide ranging and overlaps the work of the State Department's Refugee Bureau and HHS' Office of Refugee Resettlement.

--The roles of the three offices are tangled without any one having overall authority concerning domestic resettlement management and policy functions.

We further stated that, due to the continued fragmented management of the refugee program at the Federal level, a clarification if not a fundamental realignment of domestic refugee responsibilities among the key Federal offices is needed.

COORDINATION STILL NEEDED

Generally, both public and private sector officials believe that there continues to be a need for coordination of U.S. refugee programs. However, most officials believe that to effectively manage and coordinate the refugee program, the mandates of the Coordinator's Office need to be clarified, specifically its (1) domestic and international policymaking roles and authority and (2) relationship with Federal, State and private agencies charged with handling refugee activities. There is also a consensus that more staff continuity is needed to provide some historical perspective in dealing with refugee problems.

Voluntary and other private sector officials believe that a central focus is still needed within the Federal system--an office to keep the Refugee Bureau and ORR talking to each other. In addition, voluntary agency officials conclude that even though refugee admissions to the United States have decreased, Federal involvement with States and local governments is now greater and must be effectively coordinated.

One private sector official raised the concern that if the Office was eliminated, refugee issues and concerns would then be addressed and agency disputes resolved, by "someone at the White House dealing with refugee issues on a part-time basis." Generally, most officials believe the resettlement process needs a full-time "ombudsman" like the Coordinator's Office.

Most Federal officials believe the mandates and basic charter of the Coordinator's Office are appropriate if the basic charter is seen as that of a coordinator. They believe that the Office's involvement in the consultation process is one of its most effective functions. However, some believe that the current status and relationships of the Office with the implementing departments are "awkward," or "unrealistic." Several noted that coordination can be accomplished more effectively by using a "lead agency" structure. Virtually all the officials we spoke with believe that the lack of staff continuity within the Coordinator's Office has had a detrimental effect on its coordination and policy development activities.

We were reminded that when the Office was created, over 168,000 refugees a year entered the United States and the lack

of coordination of Federal, State, and local resettlement programs created major problems. Now, with an anticipated flow of refugees of between 40,000 and 60,000 per year, with a consultation mechanism in place, and with increased coordination established at all levels, some officials question the need for such a broad mandate for the Office.

IMPLEMENTATION OF MANDATES

Overall, Coordinator's Office roles, responsibilities, and relationships with public and private agencies are causing problems for the Office in carrying out its mandated responsibilities. The domestic and international policy development responsibilities of the Office (and other agencies) remain issues of concern at the Federal level. There is a general consensus that consultation and coordination throughout the refugee field has improved over the past 3 years. There is also general agreement that preparation for and facilitation of the coordination and consultation meetings held by the Coordinator's Office can be improved.

Coordinator's Office involvement in the international arena has increased over the past year and some initiatives to expand resettlement opportunities in (and increase assistance by) other countries have been positive. The roles and responsibilities of the Office in this international area, however, are not clear. Also, the Office responsibility to negotiate with foreign governments and international organizations overlaps management responsibilities of State's Refugee Bureau.

The mandates to design an overall budget strategy and to oversee and review federal program regulations and procedures have not been fulfilled. This is due, in part, to limited staff and a lack of authority over such agency functions.

Policy development and authority

The legislative mandate requiring the Coordinator to develop an overall U.S. refugee admission and resettlement policy has proved to be extremely difficult and controversial. Overall, policymaking responsibilities remain an issue between the Coordinator's Office and other Federal agencies. Also, the Office lacks both the resources and authority to implement or enforce policy. The intent of the mandate is not clear so the question remains: Is the Coordinator the senior refugee official responsible for establishing U.S. refugee policy or is he responsible only for ironing out policy differences between agencies and providing them with general guidance?

The heads of Federal agencies and departments have historically maintained responsibility for the management and effective use of appropriated funds. The mandate does not give the Coordinator's Office the authority to ensure that policies it develops will be carried out by these agencies and departments.

In our March 1, 1983, report, "Greater Emphasis on Early Employment and Better Monitoring Needed in Indochinese Refugee Resettlement Programs" (GAO/HRD-83-15), we cited the need for a clarification of the Coordinator's fundamental responsibilities in order to overcome the existing "tangled" and "fragmented" U.S. refugee program structure. The Coordinator agreed that program and budget responsibilities should be clarified. As one official stated, "there are false expectations of what the Coordinator can do considering its limited authority."

What does policy development mean?

The Refugee Act of 1980 specifically tasks the Coordinator's Office to "develop overall refugee admission and resettlement policy" but does not clearly define the scope of this policy development function. For example, according to the Refugee Policy Group interpretation, policy development is but one of several components in the total policymaking process which also includes doing research, organization and systems analysis, program assistance, and program implementation.

Policy development consists of such activities as (1) researching issues, (2) analyzing options, (3) mediating between organizations to gain support for options, and (4) persuading decisionmakers to choose desired proposals. An April 1982 Refugee Policy Group study stated that a number of persons working in the refugee field believed that the Coordinator's Office "has not been able to perform these functions as fully as was intended." During this review, we also found that these policy-development functions have either not been done by the Coordinator's Office (due in part to staff size) or could be done better.

Research and analysis: In 1981 we concluded that if the Coordinator's Office is to play a significant role in policy development, it must (in addition to having adequate staffing and authority), develop "some type of orderly approach to receiving and analyzing data as a basis for tracking and evaluating activities and engaging in long-term planning related to program and policy needs." Federal agency officials told us that there is still no systematic flow of information between the Coordinator's Office and the agencies and that no meaningful review of department regulations and procedures has been made.

Officials in the Coordinator's Office commented that, due primarily to limited staff and resources, they have not been able to do much in-depth policy research. However, a Refugee Information and Analysis function has been established within the Office to develop data and analysis standards and policy, and a data collection system is being developed to identify the location, skills, training, and health conditions of refugees.

Mediating and persuading: Communication among refugee-related organizations has improved and the objectives of the

consultation meetings held with other agencies during the past year are supported. Discussion and resolution of issues at these meetings, however, was viewed as less than effective. This is due, in part, to the perception that the overriding objective of the Coordinator's Office is to reduce the scope and funding of refugee programs and that the proposals made by the Coordinator's Office were predetermined to meet this objective. Some officials thought the proposed policy changes were not well presented, even though supporting data was available. For example, to promote the reduction of the refugee reimbursement period of the States to less than 36 months (in order to get refugees off the welfare rolls as soon as possible), the Coordinator's Office reportedly prepared charts and graphs showing that the States' costs would, in the long run, be cut by reducing the Federal reimbursement period. This analysis, which may have helped the Coordinator's Office gain support for the proposal, was not presented at any of the consultation meetings.

Generally, this and other policy changes proposed by the Coordinator's Office have met resistance from the Federal, State, local, and voluntary agencies.

Coordinator's Office views of its
policymaking role

At hearings before the House Foreign Affairs Committee in March 1982, the Coordinator testified that his authority to change and develop U.S. refugee policy came from his ability to recommend, argue, and convince. He recognized that the Act did not give him the authority to direct Federal programs and that his responsibility was to be a "coordinator" of the implementing agencies. At hearings before the Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees and International Law, House Committee on the Judiciary, in April 1982, the Coordinator said the Refugee Act gave him sufficient authority to respond to all refugee situations.

More recently, the Coordinator's Office has commented that the Coordinator is the senior U.S. refugee official responsible for developing and implementing both U.S. international and domestic refugee policy and that the functional management of refugee programs is assigned to the Federal departments with policy guidance and budget direction from the Coordinator's Office. Under that designation the Office has proposed several program and policy changes affecting State Department and HHS implementation of refugee resettlement.

Coordinator's Office officials, recognizing the lack of specific authority to enforce implementation of these refugee policies, commented that they would like to have some budget approval or "sign-off" authority over Federal department programs. To improve its ability to develop policy, the Coordinator's Office has also initiated the Senior Interagency Group for Refugee Policy to be chaired by the Coordinator. Overall, this

Group is to assist and advise the President and the heads of the concerned Federal agencies on the political, security, and financial implications of refugee issues. The implementing directive charges the Group to "review and assist in the development of" refugee policy. This current language in the implementing directive (May 13, 1983) does not clarify policymaking responsibilities. It appears that this Group generally will serve the same purpose, and have the same agency representation and responsibilities, as the Interagency Committee on Refugee Affairs which was established by President Carter in 1979 and which has not met since 1980.

Agency concerns over the Coordinator's perceived roles

Both State and HHS officials commented that the current Coordinator has been more active in proposing policy changes than either of his predecessors, but they could not identify any specific policy that has been accepted and implemented. They are concerned that the Coordinator's Office has become more involved in operational matters which they consider outside of its legislative mandate. This particular concern is increased by the ad hoc manner in which the Office approaches involvement in such matters.

Most officials are not clear as to the Coordinator's Office's role in policy formulation--does it direct, develop or coordinate policy? They believe that the Office does not have the legislative authority to enforce policy so its ability to implement policy comes almost exclusively from the working relationships developed with the departments and the resultant influence over their programs. The current Coordinator's relationships with State, HHS, INS and the voluntary agencies generally have been described as less than constructive.

International negotiations

The Coordinator's Office's involvement in negotiating international refugee policy has increased in the past year, but its roles and responsibilities in this international arena are not clearly defined. This, coupled with overlapping operational responsibilities of the Office and the Refugee Bureau, continues to affect the working relationship between the two. These problems are due, in part, to the general nature and varying interpretations of the mandate, and the unusual bureaucratic structure within State for dealing with international refugee issues.

According to the Refugee Act of 1980, the Coordinator, under the direction of the Secretary of State is responsible for "representation and negotiation on behalf of the U.S. with foreign governments and international organizations in discussions on refugee matters and, when appropriate, submitting refugee

issues for inclusion in other international negotiations. According to responsibilities delegated under the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, "the Secretary of State shall assume the leadership and provide the guidance for assuring that programs authorized under the Act best serve the foreign policy objectives of the United States." When the Coordinator's Office was created in 1979, the Secretary of State further delegated to it "all statutory and other authorities of the Secretary of State for the overall direction, coordination, and supervision of inter-agency refugee and migration activities of the United States government, to the fullest extent permitted by law." According to the Act, the Director of the Refugee Bureau is to receive policy guidance from the Coordinator's Office in carrying out his functions.

The respective authority of the Coordinator's Office and the Refugee Bureau and the extent to which foreign policy pronouncements can come unilaterally from the Coordinator's Office have not been resolved. The two offices now have a more conciliatory working relationship than in the past, but there is no assurance that the issue will not resurface with personnel changes. Last year, for example, there were differences of opinion concerning respective roles and responsibilities and, in a memo to the Coordinator's Office, the Director of the Refugee Bureau stated that he

"* * * would manage the international programs which are RP's (Refugee Bureau) responsibilities, mostly derived from the Refugee and Migration Assistance Act, authorities which are delegated to the Director of RP by the Secretary of State to carry out. A very large number of these programs are operated through UNHCR and RP traditionally has been and must remain the channel of communication with UNHCR. The Director of RP clearly has to be seen to be representing his programs if he is to be effective at all. To do otherwise would put the Coordinator in an operating role in the foreign affairs aspects of the refugee function, which was hardly the intent of the Refugee Act of 1980 and certainly not equivalent to the role the Coordinator plays with respect to other parties in the Executive Branch."

In 1981, we stated that, aside from participation in a few international conferences and some overseas trips, Coordinator activity in the international area was limited. This has changed. Since he was appointed, the level of involvement in international issues by the current Coordinator and his staff has been extensive. For example, he has initiated efforts to persuade other developed countries to increase their level of assistance to refugees. The Coordinator is planning to direct

the organization of a high-level consultative group of the major providers of refugee assistance (Australia, Canada, France, Japan, and the United States) to serve as the mechanism to increase, make more effective, and develop strategies and long-term plans for international assistance to refugees. The initial intent of this effort is to persuade other countries to resettle more Indochinese refugees. No date for the first full ministerial meeting of this group has been set.

The Coordinator's Office has visited with UNHCR officials in Geneva and in the field to discuss management reforms for that United Nations office. It was instrumental in relocating Amerasian children from Vietnam to come to the United States. The Coordinator also has had numerous dealings with ICM. Most recently, he and State Department officials discussed efforts to improve international assistance to refugees with the Pope and other Vatican officials.

This increased representation of U.S. refugee policy by the Coordinator's Office has resulted in an overlap of operational functions. For example, Refugee Bureau officials cite the Coordinator's Office submission of private sector proposals for refugee domestic resettlement projects, promotion of U.S. firms for overseas contracts, and direct involvement in processing activities overseas as indications that the Office is becoming increasingly involved in operational aspects of refugee assistance.

The current U.S. organizational structure for dealing with international refugee issues--the Coordinator's Office and the Refugee Bureau both reporting to the Secretary of State on separate lines of authority, is also confusing and awkward. Since the Coordinator is given the title of Ambassador-at-large (thus making him senior to the Director of the Refugee Bureau within State's bureaucratic structure), he has more perceived authority over the Refugee Bureau's programs than he does over comparable HHS and INS refugee programs. In addition, while the Coordinator has the responsibility to negotiate refugee issues with foreign governments and international organizations, it is generally the Refugee Bureau that negotiates refugee-related budget issues--including U.S. contributions to UNHCR, International Committee of the Red Cross and other organizations.

Coordination and consultation

To meet a primary objective to forge a balance in the refugee program and to implement the coordination and consultation mandates, the Coordinator's Office facilitated a series of meetings. At the Federal level, monthly sessions were held at the Assistant Secretary level with participation from State/Refugee

Bureau, HHS/ORR, INS and others.¹ We were told that minutes of the meetings were not kept.

The Office has also conducted four meetings with Federal officials and national voluntary agencies representatives in an attempt to upgrade inter and intraagency communication. In addition, it has sponsored regional consultation meetings in Chicago, Boston, Portland, and Phoenix with Federal, State and local officials, members of voluntary agencies and others to solicit their views on existing resettlement problems and needed improvements.

Most Federal officials we spoke with said the desired coordination between Federal refugee agencies, voluntary agencies, and States has improved greatly over the past 3 years, although they would not fully attribute this improvement to Coordinator's Office activities. They generally agreed that, while the intent of the current set of meetings and consultations is good and should be continued, they have not been well planned or conducted. In many cases there were no predetermined agendas, discussions were very general and speakers and attendees were selected at the last minute. Overall, there was no systematic approach to the sessions. There is also uncertainty as to how the Office uses the information gathered during the meetings.

Since about 1979, domestic implications of refugee resettlement in the United States have received increased attention. As one voluntary agency official stated, high refugee flows, the influx of Cuban and Haitian entrants, and erratic Federal policy on meeting the refugee-related financial expenditures of State and local governments, have now increased domestic concerns about refugees. Because of their responsibilities for implementing domestic resettlement, some voluntary agencies are concerned about the current Coordinator's consultation approaches and the usefulness of the meetings. Since the roles, authority, and responsibility of the Office and the other Federal agencies are not clearly defined, voluntary agencies are not sure how the Office will use the information and opinions received.

Some participants were concerned that the meetings were a forum for proposals by the Coordinator's Office to cut funding for refugee programs. Although they did not support many of the Coordinator's proposals, State and local officials appreciated the opportunity to consult with pertinent Federal officials.

¹ State's Refugee Bureau holds similar meetings at the Deputy Assistant Secretary level with the same agencies. Coordinator's Office participation at these meetings has been sporadic.

Overall budget strategy design

The Coordinator's Office has not fulfilled its responsibility to design an overall budget strategy and to provide individual agencies with budget policy guidance. Limited staff, coupled with a lack of authority over, or direct input to, the Departments' budget process suggests that implementing the mandate to design an overall budget strategy is unrealistic. Even if the Coordinator's Office were to design such a strategy, there is no requirement on the part of the departments to accept it.

In April 1982, the Coordinator reported to the Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees and International Law, House Committee on the Judiciary that he had "directed the establishment of a small but tough budget and fiscal office in order to assert for the first time some degree of oversight and analysis over the various refugee elements of the departmental and agency budgets." This office consists of one budget officer.

According to the Coordinator's Office, there was not enough time to prepare comprehensive data for the Refugee Bureau or ORR fiscal year 1984 budget submissions but it hopes to do this for their fiscal year 1985 budget submissions. The Office recognizes that its ability to design an overall budget strategy is limited but believes it can at least act as a budget "advisor" to the Federal departments.

There is also no formal, systematic flow of budget information between the Coordinator's Office and the Federal departments. According to agency officials, budget information is generally requested by the Coordinator's Office on an ad hoc basis. Without comprehensive review of State's budget process there is rarely any input from the Coordinator's Office on such things as the agency's "budget assumptions" and other planning factors before they are submitted to OMB. This absence of review contributed to a lack of coordination of refugee budget assumptions on the part of two Federal departments--in planning the Refugee Bureau fiscal year 1984 submissions, they assumed a worldwide admission level of 72,000 refugees while ORR assumed a level of 82,000 for the same year.

The Coordinator's Office made some general comments to OMB about the departments' submissions. According to an OMB official, this was more than any previous Coordinator's Office had provided.

Oversight and review of federal programs

The Coordinator's Office is responsible for reviewing regulations, guidelines, requirements, criteria and procedures of

Federal departments. We were unable to identify any such oversight and review activity and State and HHS officials we spoke with also could identify no such review of regulations or procedures.

Coordinator's Office operating plans and objectives

In 1981 we commented that the U.S. Coordinator's Office needed to develop a "clear statement of goals, objectives and strategies for achieving the ultimate objective of refugee resettlement--self-sufficiency," and to "articulate clearly public and private sector roles in refugee placement/resettlement." A comprehensive operating plan defining public and private sector roles and responsibilities has not been developed. The current plan consists of nine agenda issues which are to be addressed between January and September 1983. For example, the first three agenda issues are:

- "1) Confront the Failure in Domestic Resettlement: Restore sense of personal responsibility to [voluntary agencies] VOLAGS, as well as individual refugees. Early self-sufficiency not protracted welfare--there is no guarantee of lateral entry into middle class status. Improve efficiency in state, Federal, and VOLAG administrative overhead.
- "2) Put Teeth in Overseas Preparation: Better [English as a second language/cultural orientation] ESL/CO guided by common sense not academic or social worker mentality. Instill a sense of discipline and an American sense of societal responsibility--not just compassion. Improve program of camp consolidation during 1983.
- "3) What do we really mean by Internationalization: What can we expect and from which countries."

The content of the current plan does not provide a systematic assessment of needs, a comprehensive statement of goals and objectives, or clearly defined Federal, State or private sector responsibilities and relationships. According to the Coordinator's Office, one purpose of the recent consultation meetings is to develop such a comprehensive plan and an overall policy and plan is expected "within the next few months."

In March 1983 testimony before the Subcommittee on International Operations, House Foreign Affairs Committee, the Coordinator stated that his principle objective is to address the need for a new domestic and international balance in U.S. refugee

policy--a balance which will keep the United States as a haven for those who are persecuted while recognizing the economic and social constraints inherent in such a tradition. In addressing these constraints, a major consideration of the Coordinator's Office has been the perceived high costs of refugee programs. In a November 1982 letter to the Office of Management and Budget commenting on State's fiscal year 1984 Migration and Refugee Assistance Budget request, the Coordinator stated that it is his "firm intention to effect significant reductions in not only this request but in all refugee program budgets in FY 1984-85 time frame." His response to the ORR budget request also emphasized the need to cut ORR funds significantly.

Operating costs

The Coordinator's Office's operating costs consist of salaries, overtime pay, travel, and administration. According to State Department records, and based on our projections from the first half of fiscal year 1983 costs, total yearly expenses will be at least \$900,000, a 25-percent increase over fiscal year 1982. This increase is primarily the result of increased travel costs--80 percent of which were for overseas travel.

Office staffing

Despite its broad mandate, the Coordinator's Office continued to operate with a small staff which in the past year number about 13 people, including administrative support. Two additional people detailed to the Office are expected to be permanently assigned.

Based on the varying interpretations of the Coordinator's mandates, there are different perceptions concerning staff requirements. Some officials within the Office acknowledge that, primarily due to staff limitations, the Office is unable to carry out its oversight and review, budget design, and other mandates. The Associate Coordinators commented that staff limitations allow them to address only immediate concerns rather than each of their officially stated responsibilities. Other officials interpret the Coordinator's role as a mediator and believe that a staff of approximately 15 people is adequate.

Staffing decisions are ultimately made by State's Office of the Under Secretary for Management. According to the Coordinator's Office, while it has received some of the additional positions requested, their staffing levels are directly influenced by State's administrative structure and management decisions.